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SHADOW SKILL – Original Soundtrack – Music / Hand-to-Hand Combat

DISC ONE

1. Main Title [M-38]
2. The Warrior-Monk [M-6]
3. Born Legend [TV Size] (Vo. KASUMI)
4. Trajectory of the Soul [M-1 Drum & Tenor Percussion Only]
5. The Partial Heavenly King [M-7]
6. The Warriors of Kuruda [M-7B]
7. Rest and Release [M-21]
8. Under the Fruit Tree of Banquet [M-37]
9. The Expression of Confusion [M-36]
10. Wooden Shadows and Sunlight [M-35]
11. Dreams of Two Thousand Years [M-8]
12. Devoted to My Blood [M-9]
13. The Accelerating Pulse [M-10A + M-10B]
14. The Reason for Kindness [M-19]
15. The Summoned Visitor [M-13]
16. Footsteps Toward Repair [M-32]
17. Treachery and Collapse [M-12]
18. Awakening of the Cursed Talisman [M-15 + M-16 + M-17]
19. Rampaging Limbs [M-25]
20. The Moment Before the Attack [M-29]
21. Strength [M-31]
22. Proof of Courage [M-24]

23. What the Emblem Reveals [M-3]
24. When Protecting the One You Love [M-4]
25. LAST QUARTER [TV Size] (Vo. Princess Purin)
26. Traveler's Scenery [M-26]
27. A Girl's Fingertips [M-27]
28. A Small Wish [M-28B]
29. Bonds [M-20B]
30. Eyes of Sorrowful Color [M-22]
31. The Years of Two People [M-23]
32. Waves of Cold Air [M-11]
33. Feelings That Intertwine [M-34]
34. Approaching Killing Intent [M-33]
35. Break Through the Military Lines [M-30]
36. The Beginning of Martial Arts Training [M-14]
37. Become the Sword, Become the Shield [M-5]
38. A Fang in the Heart [M-2]
39. For My Pride [TV Size] (Vo. SPIRIT LEVEL)
40. My Sole, Matchless Technique [M-1]

BONUS TRACK

41. LAST QUARTER [OFF VOCAL VERSION]
42. For My Pride [OFF VOCAL VERSION]
43. Born Legend [OFF VOCAL VERSION]

DISC TWO

1. Over ONE (Vo. KASUMI)
Lyrics: Kimoto Keiko / Composition: Sato Hidenori / Arrangement: Goshima Sho
2. In the Heavy Sky (Vo. Princess Purin)
Lyrics: Purin / Composition: Purin / Arrangement: Fujita Naohisa
3. LAST QUARTER (Vo. Princess Purin)
Lyrics: Purin / Composition: Purin / Arrangement: Takiya Junji
4. Time With My Companions [M-53]
5. A Dark Plot Approaches [M-44]
6. The Strongest Title [M-45]
7. What I Thought Was Beautiful [M-46]
8. Ask the Brave [M-49]
9. Storm [M-39]
10. Sealed Space [M-40]
11. Even If Drenched in Blood [M-50]
12. The City That Inherits the Legacy [M-41]
13. The Final Blade [M-51]
14. Within the Morning Sunlight [M-52]
15. Night and Moonlight [M-55]
16. Between Despair and Hope [M-43]
17. Premonition of a Storm [M-47]
18. Battle Formation [M-42]
19. Walk Your Own Path [M-48]
20. A New Legend [M-54]
21. For My Pride (Vo. SPIRIT LEVEL)
Lyrics / Composition / Arrangement: Imaizumi Hiroshi
22. Show me the way (Vo. SPIRIT LEVEL)
Lyrics / Composition / Arrangement: Imaizumi Hiroshi

23. Born Legend (Vo. KASUMI)

Lyrics: Kimoto Keiko / Composition: Sato Hidenori / Arrangement: Goshima Sho

ALBUM STAFF

(BGM Section)

Production Management: Matsuzaki Yuki (Music), Ohsawa Yasuyuki (Tokyo Indoor Orchestra)

Engineer: Suzuki Koichi (KING RECORDS)

(Vocal Section)

Production Management: [KASUMI, SPIRIT LEVEL]

Yamazaki Jun (Softland)

Hashimoto Chikara (BICE SOUND) [Princess Purin]

Engineers: Nagayama Yuichi [born Legend]

Yano Takashi [For My Pride / over ONE / Show me the way]

Tsuji Koyo [LAST QUARTER]

Takeda Naoki [In the Heavy Sky]

Mastering: Kaneko Kiyoshi (KING RECORDS)

(Booklet & Package)

Jacket Illustration: Kimura Fumio

Design & CG Artwork: Suzuki Hiroyuki (KING RECORDS)

Artwork Management: Nakamura Takashi (KING RECORDS)

Photography: Kanemasa Hiroshi (Studio Image)

Interview: Jinno Masako (IDENTITY Publishing)

BGM Production: Yoshioka Kenji (KING RECORDS)

[SHADOW SKILL – The World of Music]

Part 1 / Music · Interview with Composer Toshihiko Sahashi

Composer Toshihiko Sahashi, who has been involved in many titles connected with Studio Pierrot's works, followed up his collaboration with Kenji Kawai on the OVA version by taking sole responsibility for the music of the TV series. This time, we asked Mr. Sahashi about how he came to be involved with the project and about his approach to the score.

To start right away: what was it about this work that attracted you, Mr. Sahashi? And if you can say, which character do you like the most, and why?

Sahashi (hereafter T): That's a really difficult question right from the start. I like all of them. I like Elle because she keeps striving to go beyond her own limits; I like Kyo because he watches over her; I like the bond between the two of them; I like the way Fog stands. I like everyone. I'm completely hooked. The courage, the strength, and the way they continue to live and grow—this kind of dynamic world really resonates with me. I think many fans must be finding something meaningful in this work as well. For example, in the liner notes for the OVA CD "Song of Vengeance," I wrote a comment saying that whatever each of us receives from a work like Shadow Skill becomes our own strength. I like that kind of energy.

The recording for episodes 1 and 2 of Shadow Skill overlapped with the TV series Lost Universe and the theatrical film Slayers Gorgeous. Was it difficult working on multiple projects with different personalities at the same time, all within such tight schedules?

T: Well, actually the schedules were slightly staggered, so that helped. Even though each project was different, I was able to concentrate on them one at a time without overlap. My mind works almost like a kind of single-task processing, so I'm not very good at handling several works simultaneously. Each project has its own unique personality and its own world, so working on them felt like traveling to many different places in a short time. That was enjoyable. And since each work's director provided very clear "menus" for the music, it was easy for inspiration to come. When discussing the music, the directors often give little descriptive phrases—something that feels very much like them. For Shadow Skill, the "menu" began with things like "folk instruments from the mountainous regions" and "music with an ethnic flavor." The idea was that people who bear the name "Shadow Skill" carry a presence that shapes the world around them. There was even a note along the lines of "existence itself carries a kind of sin." Things like that were written there. If you don't respond to descriptions like that, you'd be in trouble, right?

When creating the BGM based on those kinds of ideas, there are often a lot of cues, but sometimes you might want more seconds, or sometimes it would be easier if the cue were shorter. Were there any requests like that?

T: For TV series production, there usually aren't very strict specifications. Most of the time I compose pieces around 60 to 90 seconds long. After that, it's up to us to decide. For example, if we think a cue should play for a long dramatic scene, we might extend it to about two minutes. Or if it seems like it would be used frequently, we might build in points where it can be faded out midway, or arrange it so it can be cut shorter. Sometimes we also structure a cue so that after 60 seconds it loops naturally back to the beginning for a second pass. For theatrical works like *Slayers Gorgeous*, the exact timing of where the music enters and changes is completely fixed, but TV series usually rely on temporary editing, so often we're given a lot of freedom in shaping each piece.

When composing for the TV series, did you consciously try to differentiate it from the OVA version?

T: When we started talking about the music for the TV series, that topic did come up. In the end, we decided to carry over some of the nuance from the OVA, but before that there was also a suggestion that we push the overall feel in more of a cyberpunk direction. However, with a work like *Shadow Skill*, I think the real question is how best to support the drama of the people who live in that world. Certainly you could emphasize speed and power by focusing mainly on rhythm-driven pieces and minimalistic inorganic music. But if you only dress it up with that kind of superficial coolness, you risk losing the deeper appeal of the work. At first glance, your attention is drawn to the flashy fighting scenes between warriors, but at its core the story is filled with deep love and hatred—very fundamental human emotions. The protagonist Elle lives carrying her worries, her conflicts, her fate, and her own sense of responsibility. But the music should never run ahead of the characters' emotions or actions. Instead, if you focus on those deeply rooted human feelings, the characters' cries and actions emerge as the expression of those emotions. When composing the music, I always try to keep that foundation in mind.

You are also in charge of the synthesizer music recorded together with the live orchestra, following *Lost Universe*, correct?

T: Yes. As I mentioned earlier, in terms of the initial conception of a piece there isn't much difference between the two approaches. Whether it's live orchestral recording or synthesizer-based music, the process begins by imagining what kind of piece it should be. It's like taking the director's "music menu" or the images from the original manga or storyboard and wandering through them like traveling. But the actual production work is quite different. In the case of live orchestra, you first complete the piece on paper, then arrange it for the instruments, and only when it's performed in the studio for recording do you hear the real sound. With synthesizers, on the other hand, you develop the piece while listening to the sound as you build it. It's more like working toward a rough image while gradually completing the piece. In practice, the music takes shape step by step. It feels almost like simulating in front of your eyes what you had in your head.

This may be getting a bit technical, but what equipment are you using this time?

T: For sequencing I'm using Logic Audio. The computer is a Mac. As for the sound sources, there are various ones, but mainly for sound modules I used things like the JV-1080 and JD-990 this time. For rhythm equipment I used the D4 and the RM50. I also used Roland and AKAI samplers, but only a single 3cc unit (laughs). It's really a pretty simple setup. All of it runs through a 02R and is sent directly to DAT. Some of the orchestral recordings were also sampled and edited on the computer as material, then mixed into the track. Things like the M-44 were done that way.

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Regarding the live orchestra, were there any places where you used different instruments than usual, or anything that changed compared with a normal orchestral recording?

T: In contrast to what I mentioned earlier, there were also cases where we layered a live orchestra over tracks that had already been programmed. M-40 is one example. For percussion we also used a goblet drum called a darbuka. For the ethnic rhythms in the ES scene, all of the percussionists performed them. When recording live, the percussion players bring all sorts of instruments, so one of them happened to have a darbuka. We tried it out, and it matched the rhythm perfectly, so we ended up using it. The name is funny—it's like a wooden turtle shell with iron rings lined up on top. M-78 uses dulcimer and tabla as the main instruments. Those are folk instruments.

Since the work ranges widely—from large-scale worldbuilding and dynamic fighting scenes to delicate psychological portrayals and even peaceful everyday moments—did you find it difficult to switch moods?

T: In that sense, it's an extremely fun work to compose for. You never get bored. Mr. Kameyama's music "menu" helped a lot, so creating those variations wasn't difficult at all.

After seeing the finished episodes, how did you feel about the way your music was used?

T: Kameyama-san is bold (laughs). When I watch the show on TV I sometimes think, "Oh!" at the way he uses the music. It synchronizes perfectly with the drama. But *Shadow Skill* is a work that's meant to be seen from a broad perspective, isn't it? The music feels the same way. When I compose, I don't get hung up on the individual instructions in the menu; instead I try to grasp the atmosphere of the menu as a whole and then break it down into individual pieces. I think that overall "catch ball" between ideas is working well this time. So when the finished BGM reaches Kameyama-san, I imagine he first sets aside the original menu that formed the premise of the piece, and then reconstructs the drama from several pieces of BGM. Actually, we never explicitly discussed that process, but when I watch the completed episode, it feels like he builds the structure that way. Centering the characters' emotions—that's very much Kameyama-san's style of music direction.

The OVA had a memorable main theme. In the TV series, part of that melody appears early on, and the fully developed, classically arranged version (M-54) appears later. Was that planned from the start?

T: It wasn't planned exactly—it just happened naturally. When the TV series started, there were various reasons why the recordings made for the OVA couldn't simply be reused as they were. During the music meetings we even talked about not using the previous melody at all. But once production actually began and I started composing new pieces for the TV series, that earlier melody kept popping up in my head (laughs). At first I tried to avoid it and create something different that only resembled it slightly. But then I suddenly thought that perhaps it was important not to worry too much about that impression, so I stopped resisting my own instincts and just wrote the music.

As a result, among the cues recorded for the first half, there are a few that quote melodies from the OVA version. While I was thinking about that, Kameyama-san happened to say almost the exact same thing. Then, during the recording sessions for the second half, there were requests for several cues based on the OVA versions after all. When you're watching a scene that continues from the OVA, it feels natural if that theme starts playing. That melody had already made a strong impression on viewers and had been accepted by the audience, so I was happy about that as well. In the end we decided to do that approach for the latter half. Besides the main theme, there are also pieces from the OVA that were newly recorded for the TV series after discussing them with Kameyama-san.

Finally, could you give a message to the fans?

Shadow Skill might not be the kind of work whose depth everyone can easily understand, but I think that for the people who do connect with it, it becomes something they can't let go of. Personally, it started simply because I got hooked on it as a fan, but working together with the people who support Shadow Skill and cheering the work on together is what has brought me to where I am now. That's why I'm looking forward to seeing what happens to Elle and Gau in the future as the story continues. Being able to become immersed in a work like this is a wonderful thing. To all the fans who love Shadow Skill (laughs), and to the many people entering this world for the first time—please continue to support it! And to the original creator, Megumu Okada-sensei, please continue to show us many more wonderful episodes of Elle and Gau's drama. Thank you very much!

(Recorded at his home on November 20, 1998.)

[1] Sahashi recorded BGM four times for the TV broadcast of Lost Universe from April to September 1998. For the August 1998 film Slayers Gorgeous, he also newly recorded several of Hattori Takayuki's previously composed tracks as original versions. In the PlayStation game Shadow Skill: The Prince of Darkness, released the same month, he handled the incidental music for the drama separately from Hattori's BGM.

[2] Minimal music: music based on minimal units. Here it can be interpreted as a cool, inorganic sound produced by a sequencer rather than human performance.

[3] In earlier works the synthesizer music was often handled by a separate composer while Sahashi focused on the live orchestra, but in Lost Universe and this title he handled both. As you can hear, it demonstrates the breadth of his musical range.

[4] A goblet-shaped drum from Western Asia. In Turkey it is known as the darbuka, but instruments with similar shapes exist under various names in Afghanistan, Thailand, Arabia, Greece, and other regions. In West Africa there is also the djembe, which is closely related to the darbuka.

[5] A European instrument in which many strings are stretched across a trapezoidal wooden box (a type of zither). It is played by striking the strings with small hammers. In America it is sometimes called a hammered dulcimer or Appalachian dulcimer.

[6] A North Indian percussion instrument played as a pair. The drum placed on the performer's right is called the tabla and the one on the left is called the baya, but together they are often simply referred to as "tabla." As a side note, when Mr. Sahashi traveled to India he intended to buy a pair because "tabla are cool," but he accidentally purchased only the right-hand drum; this has since become a well-known anecdote.

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Born Legend

The wind racing across the wasteland
stirs up the red sand.
Beyond the swirling dust, history unfolds.
Though wounds alone cannot carry our feelings,
sometimes even the smallest kindness becomes a weapon.

Gentleness is never weakness—
true strength lies in the ability to judge.
When you understand real pain,
you awaken to the power within everything.

Yes—because we lose our way, because we struggle,
darkness will surely come.
Because we embrace, because we love,
there comes a time when we must cry out.
Hold onto the meaning of hope and the meaning of life.
A legend that only you are allowed to carry begins now.
Even if it feels like throwing your heart away in the fruit of solitude,
you were still searching within that lonely reality.
A warmth that never fades cannot exist forever.
Gently, you step away from that day—
and go on your journey.

Before love's radiance fades and disappears,
before everything is lost,
shake that hand away—
the final proof of the love you once held.

Now then—if you travel, if you believe,
don't stop for memories or hesitation.
Cast away the noise of hesitation and trembling fear.
Even if betrayal brings sorrow, if you call it fate,
then understand this—
don't turn back. Don't forget me.

Yes—because we lose our way, because we struggle,
darkness will surely come.
Because we embrace, because we love,
there comes a time when we must cry out.
Hold onto the meaning of hope and the meaning of life.
A legend that only you are allowed to carry
begins now.

For My Pride

Night brings darkness, and the moon shines.
The stars grow dim, flowing down into the earth.
Is that why we travel—to reach somewhere?
Or is there no answer at all?

When I look back, I hear a voice quietly whisper,
“People carry their sins,
yet live while holding the sorrow they come to know.”

Pride you're my pride just my pride
To protect myself, I bare my fangs and hide my weakness.
for my pride just my pride
The strength I was taught—
even risking my life—
going toward what I love
is what we call courage.
I'm gonna take my pride

Chosen by the times, born into this world,
I journey on, searching for the life that was given to me.

In this moment, with my eyes turned toward tomorrow
that never stops moving forward,
even if I can see the road ahead
and feel like giving up pride

You're my pride just my pride
As long as the path I chose continues, it cannot end.
for my pride just my pride

Even if I'm fiercely wounded, getting my way, getting my aim—
even in the depths of darkness
I can say that my vow has been fulfilled.
Becoming pride.

Pride
you're my pride just my pride
To protect myself, I bare my fangs and hide my weakness.
for my pride just my pride
The strength I was taught—
even risking my life—
going toward what I love
is what we call courage.
I'm gonna take my pride

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LAST QUARTER

The waning moon appears

Flowing along, the cluster of stars carries the future

Onto your shoulder

Ah, the path of the night slowly circles in silence

Pointing toward the celestial dome, like a sword

Receiving the light as it waits

Ah, sinking into the depths of chaos

Yes, the flickering flame

The fierce pulse and the LAST QUARTER wind

As if the whirlpool of darkness were laughing

Around me, the LAST QUARTER stars

Fell— I heard their sorrowful sound...

Babylon's angel has now lost its wings

Ah, in the depths of dreams, hey, it calls your name

Toward an unseen tomorrow, the LAST QUARTER calls

As if closing the night

With both hands outstretched, the LAST QUARTER gently

Falls strangely, with its eyes closed...

The fierce pulse and the LAST QUARTER wind

The whirlpool of darkness, as if laughing

With both hands outstretched, the LAST QUARTER gently
Falls strangely, with its eyes closed...

OVER ONE

In the light wind, flowers of burning passion
Bloomed in the sunlight

In the quiet, not knowing fear
At the dawn of the beginning

What remains in the end
Is the courage to challenge what cannot be done

If you deceive yourself
Even your heart will scatter

Time that will never return twice
People seek tomorrow

One day, stopping in place
Even if you resent your youth

If you only keep running blindly
By the time you realize anyone could do that
Neither joy nor pain
Will ever become real

In this endless journey where everything passes each other by
Embrace the meaning and strength of destiny
Cut it into your heart again tonight
So you can run forward

The earth becomes stained, a single shadow

A wailing wind sweeps through
Beyond the sky's haze, the sound of wings
Echoes far away

What you lose and what you are given
Even the fragments that saved you
Change their form and
Pass you by again

Realizing that time never comes twice
You understand the weight of days gone by

You wished to live tomorrow
Even if you resent your youth

Now that you've run this far without stopping
A door you cannot avoid opens

Even while being trapped by a trembling heart
Carry the suffering and move beyond it

Only those who ask, only those who run
Hold unseen fangs and unseen wounds

Not just to forget
But to aim for something

In this endless journey where everything passes each other by
Embrace the meaning and strength of destiny
Cut it into your heart again tonight

So you can run forward

So you can overcome one more thing

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Show me the way

Closing my eyes, I entrust my chilled body to the earth
Embraced by a sky full of stars, I'm healed and drift into dreams
Crossing through thousands of moments, the faint smiles of light
Shine like the courage engraved deep in my heart

A distant legend brushes against my bare shoulders
Even if I lose my way, it still lights the darkness ahead

fly away, so far away
in my heart, and in my soul
wipe away, all tears of mine
try again, don't be afraid
One day, when I awaken to the morning

I hear someone calling from somewhere
"Keep your eyes fixed ahead"
A gentle push against my back urges me forward

If I keep running without hesitation
Even the wind will wipe away my tears
Let's go meet tomorrow's sunlight
With every step firmly grounded

The vows we shared with such passion
And the feelings that intertwined so deeply
On nights when loneliness freezes over
Will become the seeds within my heart

Fly away, so far away
In my heart, and in my soul
Wipe away, all tears of mine
Try again, don't be afraid
When wings begin to beat
And guide my way
Even my wounds
Will turn into pride

Someday I'll set out
Toward the future

Fly away, so far away
In my heart, and in my soul
Wipe away, all tears of mine
Try again, don't be afraid
I hear someone calling from somewhere
Telling me to keep looking forward
And gently pushing me on

Fly away, so far away
In my heart, and in my soul
Wipe away, all tears of mine
Try again, don't be afraid
When wings begin to beat
And guide my way
Even my wounds
Will turn into pride

Someday I'll depart toward the future

Heavy Sky

In the heavy sky where dirty clouds gather
They flow and surround me until I can hardly breathe
And fade away like a tragedy

Hey... the summer day when I met you
Still echoes softly even now

Countless memories I can't hold onto
Fade away beyond that forest
The voice that called my name here
Will soon become the wind and slip away

The umbrella of dreams that fell onto the water's surface
Has lost the scent of summer
From the palm of my hand—fumm...
Only “goodbye” trembled like a spinning top

The poem I send to you now
Is a promise only the two of us know

The memories left from those summer days
Even when they become illusions
I keep searching for them
The day I fell in love with you will never return
Even if its original shape breaks apart
I keep searching for it

Countless memories I can't hold onto
Fade away beyond that forest

The voice that called my name here
Will soon become the wind and slip away

The distance that separated those summer days
Fills the heart that feels ready to break
Under the heavy sky where early autumn shadows fall
Unchanging feelings drift along with the clouds

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“SHADOW SKILL – The Musical World of Shadow Skill”

Part 2: Music Menu by Sound Director Yasuki Kameyama

(Cooperation: Omnibus Promotion)

A music menu is a tool used when commissioning background music for a work. It allows the director to clearly convey the intended mood, usage, and imagery for each piece to the composer. For this project, the music was created using an “orthodox” method: first preparing the following menu and having the composer begin writing while using it as a guide.

The album mainly contains background music used in the television version. Some numbers were ultimately omitted due to recording requirements.

First Recording Session Music Menu (Draft) – May 7, 1998

Regardless of family background or civil status, one proclaims oneself through one’s own strength and takes on a title worthy of that claim. The story is set in a medieval-style legend where this concept of the “primordial nature of existence” forms the central theme. In that sense, it does not differ from the heroic legends of the past. However, we hope to explore something that incorporates the fresh sensibilities of television animation. (You might even think of it as bordering on cyberpunk.)

For tracks M-1 through M-5, rather than being tied to specific scenes, they should express the world itself. Unless otherwise specified, please think of the pieces as being about one and a half minutes long.

1. Sephir (Apprentice Knight) – Solitude

The title says it all: a lone knight. Sephir of the Kurda clan is an unmatched fighter, yet she has never been defeated. To obtain the title granted to the winner of the martial arts tournament, she must continue fighting challengers endlessly. Please create music that reflects her stern presence and solitary demeanor as she stands firm against her harsh fate.

Desert wind imagery. (2 minutes)

2. Sephir – Fate

A piece emphasizing the idea that one's position and destiny clash even with friends or benefactors. It reflects the sadness of walking alone toward a life-or-death battle to protect what must be protected. The music should convey the figure of someone enduring the weight and cruelty of destiny.

Melody-driven. (2 minutes)

3. Sephir – Her Reputation

For the sake of the ones she loves and for Sephir's pride, she steps onto the battlefield. She is a warrior who at times proudly proclaims her name, yet also one whose presence can inspire fear. The piece should begin with low instruments and a slowly developing melody, then gradually introduce percussion that strikes sharply, expressing confrontation with an enemy. (1½ minutes)

4. Sephir – Her Glory

The voice of those she has protected in victory. A sense of peace wells up in her heart. Rising again after hardship, stained with blood yet undefeated, the warrior kingdom's pride—the name Sephir—brings healing and honor to the body and soul. A pleasant wind blows. Please create a triumphant piece that builds in grandeur and celebration. (2 minutes)

5. Sephir – Her Passion

When a knight finds something worth protecting, their heart becomes even stronger. Sephir's passion is tied to the existence of those she protects. For their sake she casts aside every calculation and throws herself into battle regardless of the hardships. The piece should begin with a sense of danger and inner conflict, then gradually lead to quiet resolve and finally passionate determination—like someone casting aside hesitation and rushing to the battlefield. (2 minutes)

6. Unarmed Legend (56 seconds)

Music for the first episode opening battle. Begin with a sharp accent, maintaining tension, building up around the 12-second mark with high instruments and heightened intensity, reaching a climax around 52 seconds before ending sharply. Please make the piece impactful from beginning to end. (56 seconds)

7. The Warrior Kingdom Kurda – Part 1: Market

Low houses of the townspeople stretch out, and beyond them the pointed towers of the castle can be seen. In the lively marketplace, merchants and travelers—men, women, and children—pass through the streets. The warrior kingdom can feel both intimidating and surprisingly familiar. Please create music that blends those elements and reflects a bright medieval town setting. (1½ minutes)

8. The Warrior Kingdom Kurda – Part 2: Castle

The stone walls of the castle, bearing the glory of the warrior kingdom, give a sense of dignity and strength. While the soldiers carry the harsh duty of warriors, they also know the value of the lives they protect. This place may be the city of the young warriors.

9. The Opening Ceremony

Music imagining the entrance of honored guests, with an atmosphere resembling a fanfare. The tone should be heavy and majestic. Toward the end, leave a lingering sense of tension that foreshadows the battles to come. (1½ minutes)

10. Arena Entrance

Please compose a drum-centered piece. Provide both a slower-tempo and a faster-tempo variation.

11. Secret Plot

Suspenseful. A clandestine meeting in an underground chamber or royal room. People pass through the corridors, giving the sense of a shadowy conference unfolding quietly. The tempo should be slightly slow, with repeating phrases in high instruments to evoke a lingering tension.

12. Conspiracy

A secret meeting with an even murkier, more sinister feeling. Imagine sounds that occasionally cut through the atmosphere with a sharp edge, adding unease.

13. Pursuit

A spy moves quietly down a dark corridor lit by flickering torches, hiding in corners while being chased. Please convey the tense atmosphere of pursuit in a restrained manner.

14. Martial Arts Tournament

A piece depicting the process of pushing one's abilities to their absolute limit under the declaration: "I am invincible." Closing one's eyes to external stimuli and concentrating solely on the countless points of energy within the body, then releasing them with explosive force. The structure should build tension for about 20 seconds, followed by roughly 10 seconds of release and resolution. (30 seconds total)

15. Charm – Fire / Explosion

A chant-like motif for a charm that, when invoked, might say: "I am flame; I burn everything to ashes." While reflecting the mysterious nature of the charm, please convey the tension of latent energy ready to erupt. (40 seconds)

16. Charm – Silence / Resolution

Same motif as above. A variation of No. 15. Please evoke a quiet, still atmosphere.

17. Charm – Death / Darkness

Same motif again. "I am darkness. I cover everything in black." A variation of No. 15, imagining something flying low through the darkness with a "whoosh" sound.

18. Charm – Blade / Arrow

Same motif. Please create a rising sense of tension as if drawing a sword or pulling back a bowstring.

19. Elle's Theme 1 – Cool Sephir

Elle has both a gentle heart and a reckless fondness for drinking. Though she is Sephir's 59th successor, she also helps the weak and punishes the wicked. This piece should emphasize her cool, heroic side.

20. Elle's Theme 2 – Kindness

Elle takes in a boy rescued from a destroyed village and raises Gau as her younger brother. Though she is a powerful warrior, she is also someone who warmly watches over others. Please write a piece reflecting that gentle side.

21. Elle's Theme 3 – Drinking

Any money she earns disappears into alcohol immediately. She's hopeless in that way, yet there's also a fond, almost parental warmth to her personality. Please compose a piece with a relaxed, somewhat tipsy feeling.

22. Gau's Theme 1 – Solitude

Music reflecting Gau's past after losing both parents when his village was destroyed. Though he was a weak boy, he now begins to grow stronger. The piece should capture the loneliness within his heart.

23. Gau's Theme 2 – Feelings for Elle

As his guardian, Elle represents everything in Gau's world. Gau's feelings for her are close to genuine devotion. Having found someone to protect, Gau begins to grow as a warrior. Please compose a quiet piece reflecting his feelings for Elle.

24. Gau's Theme 3 – Standing Up for Elle

Gau rises with strong determination to protect Elle. As he becomes trapped within the outcome and realizes he must act even when he cannot move forward, he learns what it means to overcome all obstacles. Please compose a piece that begins with quiet tension and gradually builds toward awakening.

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25. Fokkerie's Theme – Cursed Swordsman

A piece depicting Fokkerie, a wandering swordsman cursed by dark magic. Even when he tries to cast magic, it doesn't go well—he's clumsy, even with a wooden staff? I'd like something speedy that captures him rushing into battle.

26. Fokkerie's Theme – Househusband (General)

Elle and Gau are helping with chores. Fokkerie isn't the type who handles household duties. Everyone's teasing him about helping out, so he ends up angrily chopping wood. Please write a slightly comedic, lighthearted piece that fits this situation. It ends happily. (About 1 minute)

27. Kyuua's Theme – Cherishing

A theme for Kyuua, a young girl with a mysterious past who is aware of her connection to the Phantom Knights. The music should portray her deep and quiet sorrow. With the ring of metal and the sound of the wire twirling around her, please create a theme that suggests Kyuua's light and agile movement.

28. Kyuua's Theme – Reflection

Elle and Fokkerie have fallen into a deep pit. The fight cannot be avoided. The person Kyuua loves has been hurt, and she finds herself acting without thinking. Please imagine a quiet, heartfelt scene where Kyuua reflects on the days she spent with the two of them.

29. Battle 1 – Duel of Heroes

Two warriors face each other. Begin with a tense but refined atmosphere, then shift into a bold touch as the sudden battle unfolds.

30. Battle 2 – Assault / Advance

Start with the impression of a splendid formation advancing while enemies approach from all sides, then transition into the depiction of a fierce charge forward.

31. Battle 3 – Crisis

An enemy suddenly appears before your eyes. Start with a restrained, tense introduction and quickly move into a fast-paced battle. (If possible, it would be nice if it left a refreshing impression.)

32. Battle 4 – Ambush

A track for lying in wait and striking the enemy. It can represent either ambushing Bakemo, the “King of the Moon,” or lying in wait for an approaching enemy.

33. Battle 5 – Close Approach

As you move forward, a gigantic beast draws closer step by step. Please write a piece that reflects the dread of its looming presence, and the sense that fate may already be sealed.

34. Battle 6 – Secret Attack

An attack launched from the shadows—or perhaps simply a fight born of jealousy. Start with a heavy intro reflecting the darkness in someone’s heart, then develop it into a battle piece expressing determination to strike harder than ever before.

35. Interlude – Part 1

Elle is sleeping. The peaceful calm is so gentle that even birds settle down during their flight. Yet the events of last night keep coming back to mind. A faint feeling lingers: “If only things could stay like this...” Please create a song with a somewhat nostalgic atmosphere.

36. Interlude – Part 2

Elle is asleep. But last night’s drinking went too far. All the hard-earned prize money has disappeared into the tavern by the time they return. The next morning, Elle changes into her adventurer’s outfit with a refreshed mood. Please write a character piece reflecting Elle’s carefree and easygoing personality.

37. Debt and Starvation

With debts piling up, there’s no steady income in sight. Not only is breakfast impossible, but the debt keeps growing. The image is of trudging along on an empty stomach. Please write a song expressing the height of misery. (About 1 minute)

38. Main Title

39. Subtitle?

40. Eyecatch?

Second Music Order Sheet – Music Menu (Draft) Sept. 10, 1998

39. Darkness (Lurking Presence) – Also used as a variation for behind walls

An outsider. Dark magic. A man who glides as if sliding along and disappears into the wall.

40. Darkness (Enemy) — or a recollection of a bitter battle in the past

“Listen to the sound of the bell.” Time that should have stopped begins to move again. Though his breathing is ragged and chaotic, the man stands firm against his opponent’s inevitable attacks. Before the enemy can act, he strikes first. Yet the opponent’s blows are fundamentally different from ordinary attacks. Please create a piece with gentle changes in intensity.

41. Remembering Dias

“...To live, I entrust this weapon to you... For this is a battle you must survive.”

Dias dies protecting Gau, the person closest to him. Reflect the resolve in Gau’s heart as he remembers Dias and raises his sword again. Please structure the piece so that a quiet determination grows into the resolve to live on.

42. Battle with the Ranger Hawk

A murderous hawk swoops down from above. From its evil eyes and black wings, the monster traps everyone in its deadly range. Please write a tense battle piece beginning with the shock of the first strike as it dives down to attack. (Imagining a thin, sharp rhythm and high woodwinds.)

43. Song of the Kingdom of Noor

Noor is a poor nation, and its strength is said to come from that very sense of lack. Please create music with a lonely atmosphere, like wandering refugees dancing in desolate lands, or drifting through slums.

44. Ajeet of the Shia Khan — or the Talisman of “Evil”

Location unknown, scale unknown. Most likely somewhere in the Holy Kingdom of Ashulia. A base where rebels gather when the directive comes from the leader Ajeet of the Shia Khan. The charm of evil magic around the neck of G-Kain Franz moves independently of the body, sometimes even moving on its own. Please create a piece reflecting an ominous, eerie mood.

45. Battle of G-Kain Franz

From the first strike through the fourth movement, the tension should steadily escalate like climbing steps. Please write battle music with that structure.

46. Death of G-Kain Franz

After three years of hardship, worn out by battle, G-Kain Franz finally seems ready to leave this world. A quiet chorus, as if Gau's lingering words reach him.

47. Urgent Battle (A faster-tempo version of something similar to M-11)

48. Battle Music Variation (A variation that livens up the melody of the "Hero's Battle" theme, like M-29)

49. Zai-Oh (A harsh, heavy battle theme)

A slow to mid-tempo battle piece with weight. While maintaining tension, please also include a tragic sense of destiny—like a requiem for a fierce struggle. Even if one wins, the battle will not feel victorious. The opponent also carries sorrow in their heart.

50. A lightly arranged version of M-40

51. Power of the Sorma

The power that fills—or once filled—the land of the Holy Kingdom Ashulia: the power of Sorma. It is the energy of nature, the force of wind and water. Now that power is said to have faded from the Holy Kingdom. Please write a mystical piece that expresses this mysterious theme. It would be best if it ends with a dignified atmosphere.

52. The Decline of Sorma

The power of Sorma that supported the nation is now fading, bringing crisis to the kingdom. King Ashulivent lies sick in bed, with no sign of recovery. Even the lands near the capital carry a dangerous air. Please compose a sorrowful piece with an air of dignity.

53. A fast-tempo gag piece

*Regarding M-54 and M-55, the OVA version's BGM had already been decided to be renewed, so a music menu does not exist.

“The Musical World of SHADOW SKILL – Shadow Arts”

Part 3: Interview with Music Producer Takashi Yoshioka

Recently, the title “music producer” has appeared more frequently in the credits of anime productions. In this work, what sort of role did that involve? We asked this straightforward question.

Yoshioka (hereafter Y): In Japan’s music scene today, when someone produces music, it usually means they’re responsible for bringing a composer’s work to the public. But sometimes it also means determining the overall musical direction of a project and selecting the composers and artists who will realize that vision. In this case, I was credited more in that second sense. I think the staff kindly included my name, but the actual director might have wondered if it was really appropriate to call me the “music coordinator.” Normally someone from the record company handles that, and their name often doesn’t appear in the credits. When some people saw my credit they joked about it and had a good laugh. It’s not like I was doing something that required the title of producer or anything like that (laughs).

Was the composer decided at an early stage?

Y: Yes. As long as the production side didn’t insist on using someone who had worked on the previous OVA series, I felt that someone like Shinbe could work with anyone. Still, we wondered if we should go with a familiar composer just in case. But at the same time, there was also the theatrical version of *Slayer* being recorded in London, so scheduling-wise it might have been difficult to ask a well-known composer. After discussing it with Shinbe, he said, “I love *Shadow Skill*, so please let me do it!” Once he said that, we felt we had to go forward with him, even if it meant taking a bit of a gamble. With that momentum behind us, we decided to ask him to handle the music as an original composer.

What were the concepts behind each of the theme songs?

Y: When I met with the director and producers, the first meeting turned into a three-hour discussion where I kept asking, “Is this okay?” while talking about the appeal of *Shadow Skill* (laughs). The OP contains Elle’s message to Gau, and the ED is Gau’s answer back to Elle—that’s the kind of emotional connection we tried to create. It’s not something meant to push itself onto the audience like “You have to listen to this!” It’s more about expressing the sense of distance between them and the warmth of their relationship. The main staff did a great job portraying Gau’s independence and Elle’s loneliness and resolve during that time. Of course the ED is a different type of song. At first we wondered if a new-feeling, high-quality female vocal track might not fit the series. But the editor from the music department happened to suggest a female artist we had been thinking about, and we quickly decided on the “female type” track. As the series progressed, the story became increasingly serious and took on a “serious route,” so early on we aimed to create something that would really draw viewers in. It seems like the female-vocal type was concentrated in the first course.

For the broadcast version, we didn't simply use the previously released song as-is—we arranged it to better match the story. The title “Last Quarter” refers to the moon that is four-tenths full, and in the series both Lulice and the story itself contain elements connected to the moon. We tried to express that mysterious feeling in the way the lyrics and Gau's words overlap. Depending on how you interpret it, you could say the lyrics aren't just directed at the characters, but also speak to the feelings of the fans.

The OP is an arrangement of an existing piece, isn't it?

Y: Yes. Since the OP represents the face of the series, we wanted it to express the chaotic nature of the world. We also wanted to try making music that didn't rely on electric guitars—something different from the usual driving rock style. In this version, guitars are mostly used only for subtle accents. Instead we brought the synthesizer to the forefront, creating something a bit mystical, almost like a ceremonial atmosphere from some ancient tradition. We also asked for some of the edgy sound associated with noise rock and elements of Mongolian throat-style singing, and even had the CD purchase five copies so the overlapping sounds could create a kind of chaotic arrangement. That's probably why the mix ended up so dense (laughs). We went pretty far with that idea.

The two ED arrangements have very different directions. Was that intentional?

Y: With “For My Pride,” the director wanted the ED to create a sense of momentum that carries straight into the next episode. At the same time, we tried to convey the powerful determination of someone who charges forward without hesitation through the music as well. Nowadays, if you ask a visual-style band, they'll usually just sing their original songs or something similar. But with “LAST QUARTER,” which came from the BGM composer, we tried to add a slightly cyber-punk nuance—keeping the cool aspects while mixing in a bit of warmth. When I met with the director and producers, they told me, “Please add this kind of female chorus,” and we went back and forth refining the arrangement. Honestly, I wondered whether it might have been a bit excessive (laughs). But anyone who watches the series can probably understand why a female chorus was needed. In the first OVA it served as a motif, and there's a sense of destiny attached to it. The TV broadcast version's OP animation is very striking as well. Even if you watch it on video, it's powerful, so please turn up the volume and enjoy it. The main story doesn't have overly flashy action scenes without correction, so try to watch it with the lights on and not sitting too close to the screen (laughs).

Hearing all that, it sounds very much like the “Shadow Freak” mindset.

Y: Well, Shadow has been broadcast in the “Ore Universe” for about five years now, so next week's episode 24, “The Great Battle: Gau vs. Scarface,” should be fun.

(Recorded November 28, 1998, at King Record)

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